

MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
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FACILITY IS NOT WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE

DUST STORM INFORMATION AND SAFETY RULES FOR ARIZONA

WHAT IS A DUST STORM?

A dust storm is created whenever strong turbulent winds pick up loose dirt and sand particles in such quantity as to reduce visibility seriously.

WHEN AND WHERE DUST STORMS OCCUR

Dust storms can be expected during the afternoons of hot summer days when "thunderhead" clouds are seen. They generally result from thunderstorm activity which originates in the southeastern part of the state or in Mexico, and become hazardous to traffic as they move northwest toward the metropolitan area. They have the appearance of solid walls of dust and can be seen approaching from some distance.

DUST STORM HIGHWAY SAFETY MEASURES

Areas along highways in which dust storms are frequent and may cause reduced visibility are posted with "CAUTION" or "WARNING" signs.

Severe weather watches and warnings, to include possible dust storms, are broadcast over radio and television.

If a dust storm is sighted, turn on your car radio and follow these instructions:

- Reduce speed and turn on driving lights.
- If you are on a freeway, leave the freeway at an exit ramp, if possible.
- If dust becomes so intense that you cannot see 300 feet (the length of a football field) PULL OFF THE ROADWAY -- even as far as the right-of-way fence. Do not stop on the traveled portion of the roadway.
- After stopping, TURN OFF DRIVING LIGHTS.
- Wait until visibility is at least 300 feet before re-entering the roadway. Be prepared to pull off the road and stop if visibility drops again.
- Heavy rain may follow the dust storm. Watch for flooded highway dips even though it may not have rained where you have been.

ANOTHER NOTE: High winds cause dry "tumbleweeds" to break away from their roots and roll across the countryside. They are light masses of small, brittle stems and are not hazardous to automobiles. **DO NOT** take evasive action to avoid tumbleweeds. By so doing, you endanger yourself and other traffic.